International Journal of English Language and Linguistics Research
Vol.13, No 2, pp.32-49, 2025
Print ISSN: 2053-6305(Print)
Online ISSN:2053- 6313(online
Website: https://www.eajournals.org/
Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development -UK

Constructional blending: the five functions of BE supposed to and BE meant to

Stephen J Disney
Plymouth Marjon University

doi: https://doi.org/10.37745/ijellr.13/vol1n23249 Published July 30, 2025

Citation: Disney S.J. (2025) Constructional blending: the five functions of BE supposed to and BE meant to, *International Journal of English Language and Linguistics Research*, Vol.13, No 2, pp.32-49

Abstract: *The forms BE supposed to and BE meant to are 'polysynonymous' and can be used to express a wide range of functions: evidential (hearsay/reportative), deontic (intention/obligation), deontic (prohibition) and predestination. While other verbs in passives can express certain of these functions, only these two have developed the ability to appear in the full range. Following a Construction Grammar approach, this paper focusses on a further, new, function that can be illustrated by the sentence It's supposed to be good tomorrow (source: BNC KCX4941) Such an example can also contain meant to with no change of meaning. This relatively recent development expresses a 'report of a prediction'. BE expected to has a similar, but by no means identical function, and can of course also be used with a deontic meaning in a passive construction. However, this new use is not possible with other evidential/hearsay verbs when used in the same syntactic pattern. This paper discusses the semantics and fine syntactic idiosyncrasies of BE supposed to and BE meant to and concludes that this 'new' function is the result of a type of 'constructional blend' of the existing hearsay and deontic uses. It is unique to the two focal constructions due to their unique range of use across all the construction types above.*

Keywords: constructional blending, five functions, BE

INTRODUCTION

This paper draws on Construction Grammar[1] to account for an interesting recent development in the functional range of the forms of BE *meant to* and BE *supposed to*. The discussion focuses on the convergence of BE *meant to* and BE *supposed to* across several functional domains over time. Thus, the story of these particular forms illustrates many aspects of language change in a usage-based perspective. The forms BE *meant to* and BE *supposed to* instantiate a schematic pattern BE + *-en* + *infinitive*, where the *–en* can be a past participle verb or an adjective. The schematic string has long been exploited in English as a passive construction, such as (1), and as a subject complement construction with a predicative adjective such as (2).

[1] Croft, *Radical Construction Grammar*; Goldberg, *Constructions at Work*

1) So I *was told to* go to the dermatologist (G4C 23)[2]

2) I*'m* too *scared to* go in the water. (KSN 1378)

The passive construction, like (1), is the basis for other constructions with high type and token frequencies. These are used across the domains of evidentiality, epistemic modality and deontic modality, as shown in examples (3)-(5) respectively below.

3) He *is said to* be in a critical condition. (KRM 1184)

4) The gunman *is* still *believed to* be at large (K6D 226)

5) She *is required to* have an inc-- a return of her own. (G4F 161)

The current paper describes how BE *supposed to* and BE *meant to* are capable of instantiating a range of existing schematic constructions based on pre-existing templates, i.e. 'reportative/hearsay', 'deontic', 'prohibitive' and 'predestination'. Critically, only these particular forms can instantiate all of these schemas. The new use outlined in section 4 is a further convergence. The discussion demonstrates in a construction grammar perspective how a new use has developed from a blend of these existing uses based on existing schematic constructions. The process is illustrated with authentic examples, along with a few invented parallels for the sake of clarity and explication.

The paper starts with an outline of the theoretical background to construction grammar, and a comparison of BE *meant to* with BE *supposed to* along with related constructions, illustrating the functions they have in common in detail. Then the new 'reported prediction' function is presented, followed by a discussion of some of the main issues raised.

Theoretical Background

There are several theoretical assumptions made herein. Not least of these is the view that language users' knowledge of their language arises solely out of the language use they have experienced; this forms the basis of the usage-based approach,[3] and is one of the tenets in Cognitive Linguistics (CL) as a field, and Construction Grammar (CxG) in particular.[4] In line with a CxG approach, I use the word 'construction' to refer to pairings of form and function at various levels of specificity. In construction grammar, commonly used patterns that are instantiated by a variety of specific forms can be generalised and schematised to form a sort of 'template' in memory that is used to construct new utterances. They can also be exploited

[2] This paper uses examples from the BNC, an established language corpora which is designed specifically for research into English variation. Data cited with the coding in the format (XXX 123) herein have been extracted from the British National Corpus Online service, managed by Oxford University Computing Services on behalf of the BNC Consortium. All rights in the texts cited are reserved.
[3] Langacker, "Cognitive (Construction) Grammar"
[4] Croft and Cruse, *Cognitive Linguistics*

to accommodate novel lexical items that have not been hitherto used in such a way.[5] Such processes result in a system where forms, in this case verbs, are relatively flexible in the type of schematic construction in which they can appear; in other words, a schema, or a particular form, may 'sanction' interpretations of novel forms.[6] A classic example of this is (6)-(7) from Goldberg.[7]

6) She *blew* the foam off the cappuccino.

7) She *sneezed* the foam off the cappuccino.

The 'caused motion' construction presented in (6) contains a fairly central example of the type of verb usually associated with it, *blew*; that is, an agent voluntarily exerts a force on an object, which causes it to move. In contrast, one would not normally expect to find a verb like *sneezed* in such a construction, because sneezing is not normally a volitional action that we deliberately use to move some object in front of us. However, we understand the meaning of (7) as a whole utterance because we can interpret it as instantiating the same 'caused motion' meaning as that in (6), due its similarity in overall form and the context of use. The verb *sneeze* does not have a 'caused motion' sense as its lexical entry; it acquires that meaning from the construction it appears in. This appears to be the basis for how constructions work in language in general, as Goldberg argues. Over time, and with repeated use, the associations between a form and a function can become 'entrenched' in the mind of the user and can themselves become a resource in their linguistic repertoire. In fact, Goldberg claims that specific forms that instantiate schemas can become constructions in their own right:

> Any linguistic pattern is recognized as a construction as long as some aspect of its form or function is not strictly predictable from its component parts or from other constructions recognized to exist. In addition, patterns are stored as constructions even if they are fully predictable as long as they occur with sufficient frequency.[8]

Noël and Van Der Auwera make a similar point while discussing BE *supposed to*, which strongly supports the conclusions in the current paper. They conclude that

> In usage-based morphology it has been argued that word forms can be stored independently if they occur frequently enough even if they are predictable from a more schematic construction. There is no reason to assume the same does not hold for more complex substantive constructions.[9]

[5] Fillmore, Kay, and O'Connor, "Regularity and Idiomaticity"; Goldberg, "Nature of Generalization"; Croft, "Constructions and Generalizations"
[6] Langacker, *Cognitive Grammar*
[7] Goldberg, *Constructions at Work*
[8] Ibid., 5.
[9] Noël and van der Auwera, "Revisiting *Be Supposed To*", 621.

This flexibility leads to forms not only taking on what appear to be new 'default' functions, but they can lose older ones, or older ones can occur at the same time as newer ones, resulting in polysemy. Some of these changes may involve a certain amount of syntactic reanalysis and semantic bleaching, where an aspect of meaning is lost, rather than merely altered. Such changes, often accompanied by phonetic reduction, illustrate the well-known process of 'grammaticalisation', whereby lexical forms gradually become more grammatical.[10] For example, in Standard English, lexical *have* has become an auxiliary verb expressing a 'perfect' aspect, and is usually reduced phonetically when used as an auxiliary (h-elision and a schwa for the vowel), while lexical *have* retains its strong form /hæv/. It is widely noted that BE *supposed to* itself is phonetically reduced in the deontic use to /ˈspəʊstə/, while not reduced in its original hearsay use i.e. /səˈpəʊztə/.[11] However, the difference between the full and reduced forms for BE *supposed to* as representing the two main functions of hearsay and deontic modality respectively is by no means clear cut. However, in contrast to this general "rule", with BE *meant to*, the weak form /menə/ also seems more strongly correlated with the deontic, while the less reduced form /mentə/ is more common with the newer, grammaticalised, hearsay use. The claims about the pronunciation of both of these constructions requires further empirical study.

BE *supposed to* and BE *meant to* originally had functions based on the (agentless) passive 'hearsay' and 'intention/obligation' respectively and they have subsequently converged with each other, through their respective grammaticalisation processes. It is not a new claim that BE *supposed to* is grammaticalising, or even that it is a 'semi-modal'.[12] However, this paper argues for something rather more specific; *vis* that BE *supposed to* and BE *meant to,* as a related constructional pair, are entering what could be a 'next stage' in their grammaticalisation; in addition to their highly converged future obligation (deontic) uses and hearsay (evidential) uses, they seem to be developing as semi-modals of 'authority-derived predictions' about future events. The data discussion below reveals an idiosyncratic syntax, compared to similar constructions, which suggests that the forms could well be stored as independent complex substantive constructions, which Noël and van der Auwera argue is an important aspect of grammaticalisation.[13] The data on these two constructions also support the view in CxG that constructions form taxonomic networks of related functions.[14] Indeed, these forms perfectly illustrate that central point and offer strong support for the CxG view of constructional networks.

A comparison of BE meant to and BE supposed to

[10] Bybee, Perkins, and Pagliuca, *Evolution of Grammar*; Hopper and Traugott, *Grammaticalization*; Traugott, "Grammaticalization, Constructions and Incremental Development"
[11] Noël and van der Auwera, "Revisiting *Be Supposed To*"; Traugott, "Rise of Epistemic Meanings";
[12] Biber et al., *Longman Grammar*
[13] Noël and van der Auwera, "Revisiting Be Supposed To", 621.
[14] Croft and Cruse, Cognitive Linguistics

In the schematic string BE + V-*en* + *infinitive*, there are four ways in which these constructions express an identical function; there are two deontic uses ('obligation' and 'prohibition') and both can also express 'hearsay' and 'predestination'. This is why I describe BE *meant to* and BE *supposed to as being* 'polysynonymous', but their development was not straightforward. Originally, passive *supposed to* was originally only a hearsay construction. In the late 18th or early 19th century, BE *supposed to* was interpreted in some contexts as instantiating the deontic construction, probably by analogy to the template instantiated by existing deontics like BE *obliged to*.[15] It was further licensed by the fact that BE e*xpected to* has already developed this deontic function as well as being used to express beliefs about the future.[16] The deontic BE *supposed to* later gained a 'predestination' use, similar to BE *meant to*, which already expressed predestination and deontic functions in its agentless passive form.[17] Around 100 years later, in the late 19th or early 20th century, BE *meant to* gained a hearsay function, which by then was more usually expressed with BE *supposed to*. [18] This convergence occurred by a process of analogy to existing form/function pairings. This paper proposes a fifth use that they now have in common: a 'reported prediction' function. All the meanings described above can be considered conventionalised. They are all exemplified by entries in the OED3 for all these functions, albeit with significant errors in the historical.[19]

Firstly, the passive use of BE *supposed to* has a 'reputed' or 'hearsay' sense as shown in (8). A similar function has developed for BE *meant to* as well in the last 100 years, as shown in (9). Anecdotally, examples like (9) appear not to be possible in American English, but are acceptable in Australian English, which hints at its era of development being late 19th or early 20th century, bearing in mind migration patterns of the time.[20] Note that there is no 'intention' being expressed in *meant to be* in (9).

8) The food *is supposed to* be good. (G5J 1490)

9) salt *is meant to* be bad for you so the health er er er freaks say (F8N 44)

The passive with an infinitive, as a schematic construction, mobilises the concept 'hearsay' in appropriate contexts.[21] Noël convincingly argues that the agentless passive NCI (*nominativus-cum-infinitivo*) construction has developed a clear 'hearsay' function. That is, for Noël, constructional status is supported by the overall high type and token frequency with *believe* type verbs.[22] This is a highly plausible conclusion in a construction grammar perspective. He goes on to argue that "the evidential reading is the default reading of passive

[15] Disney, "Another Visit to BE *Supposed To*"
[16] See also Noël and van der Auwera, "Revisiting *Be Supposed To*".
[17] Disney, "Reputed Sense of BE *Meant To*"; Disney, "Another Visit to BE *Supposed To*"
[18] Disney, "Reputed Sense of BE *Meant To*"
[19] Ibid.: Disney, "Another Visit to BE *Supposed To*"
[20] Disney, "Reputed Sense of BE Meant To"
[21] Noël, "Passive Matrices"
[22] Ibid.

matrices".[23] That is, in examples like (9), BE *meant to* gets its meaning from the construction in which it occurs as described in the construction grammar account of language outlined above. Noël adds that the hearsay passive "can be broadly characterized as either journalistic or scientific",[24] which are both domains in which the agent is typically backgrounded, or "offstage" in CL terminology.[25] In the case of BE *meant to* however, cases are largely limited to spoken, informal everyday discourse.

A second way in which these forms are synonymous is with a deontic function, as shown in (10)-(11). The agent is again unexpressed, and, as with all the uses described here, offstage, a point which becomes relevant in the discussion below.

10) you*'re supposed to* do it (GY4 1170)

11) they *are meant to* do it (F7F 1138)

In this case, there is there is no act of *supposing* (as a mental state verb) occurring in (10). Its meaning here is the same as *are meant to* (i.e. are 'required') in (11). Here, *supposed* gets its meaning from the construction in which it occurs, i.e. a schematic deontic construction (c.f. (5) above). Note that these are also passives, but that while a sense of 'required' is part of the functional range in active uses for *mean*, it is not found in active uses of *suppose*, notwithstanding the significant errors in the OED examples.[26] [27]

The third way in which the two forms are functionally equivalent is 'pre-destination', illustrated in (12)-(13) (sourced *verbatim* from a web search). Other deontic verbs have not acquired this meaning.

12) It was just not *meant to* be.

13) It was just not *supposed to* be.

The supposed agent is again unspecified and offstage in the actual utterances and actually cannot be felicitously expressed. It is therefore a conventionalised aspect of meaning contained within the construction as a whole. Further, note how in (12) and (13) *not* directly negates *meant* and *supposed*; the negative is a straightforward antonym of the version with positive polarity (e.g. *it was meant to be*), and the meaning of the verb itself does not change. This is how verbal negation usually works. The story is rather more complex when negatives

[23] Ibid., 276.
[24] Ibid., 290.
[25] Langacker, "Cognitive (Construction) Grammar", Croft and Cruse, Cognitive Linguistics

[26] Notably Berkenfield, "Pragmatic Motivations"; Moore, "Spread of Grammaticalized Forms"; Noël and van der Auwera, "Revisiting *Be Supposed To*"; Traugott, "Rise of Epistemic Meanings"; Visconti, "Conditionals and Subjectification"; Ziegeler, "Generic Origins of Modality".
[27] Disney, "Another Visit to BE Supposed To"

in other uses are considered, and it is with negation that some of the more interesting aspects of the two constructions come to light.

Example (14) shows the two polarities contrasted in a single utterance, and again the negative is an antonym of the positive. Here, both examples of BE *supposed to* have an 'intend' sense (gloss: 'It is not intended/designed to be done like that'); the utterance is not concerned with what is 'permissible', but rather with a conventional mode of action.

14) He goes, no, you'*re not supposed to* do it like that you'*re supposed to* get her on the floor and step on her head! You're not doing it right! (KPG 5718)

In stark contrast to this, teasing apart the nuances of negation in the other deontic examples, is rather challenging. With other verbs in this pattern, like *required* in (15), the obligation is negated and there is no 'requirement' in place. But this is not the case with both BE *supposed to* and BE *meant to* in (16)-(17). Here the negation results in a 'lack of permission', a 'prohibitive' function.

15) Erm so you'*re not required to* know all that, or any of it or much of it. (JTE 726)

16) You*'re not supposed to* do that, (KP4 2341)

17) Christmas celebration. Pissed as a fart. You*'re not meant to* do that, (KP0 279)

This pattern in negation for BE *supposed to* and BE *meant to* appears to have developed by analogy to examples such as (18), with the central verbs of *allowed/permitted to* and is not a negation of the deontic 'required' sense at all.

18) Yes well you see they*'re not allowed to* do that. (K6S 784)

Examples (19)-(21) show how this flexibility with negation manifests with different instantiations of the different BE *V-ed* constructions. Assuming that the gloss with 'obligation' captures the meanings in the context, note how BE *not supposed to* and BE *not meant to* in (20) do not match the negation pattern in (19), which would be expected if they were simply expressing negatives of the deontic construction. Rather, the interpretation of the negatives here is by analogy to a different template, prototypical examples of which could be either of the two instantiations suggested in (21).

19) You're not *required/obliged to* do it this way.

'There is no obligation to do it this way.'

20) You're not *supposed/meant to* do it this way.

'There is an obligation to not do it this way.'

21) You are not *allowed/permitted to* do it this way.

'There is an obligation to not do it this way.'

This leads to the conclusion that this constitutes a different function for BE *meant to* and BE *supposed to*, and that it is not a direct negation of an existing use.

In fact, negation raises some other interesting nuances as well. Consider in this light the full utterances in (22)-(23) below that contained (16)-(17) above. There are two negated instances in each of these, but there is room for some discussion on the meanings.

22) You*'re not supposed to* do that, I'*m not* really *supposed to* make you say this. (KP4 2341)

23) Christmas celebration. Pissed as a fart. You'*re not meant to* do that, it*'s not meant to* be like that. (KP0 279)

In (22), the meanings seem to be fairly clear, and both examples express prohibition, or can be glossed as 'not allowed' as can the first instance in (23). The *you* in each case is arguably generic *you*, not a direct reference to an interlocutor. However, the second instance in (23), with BE as the complement verb, is not clearly expressing prohibition. It seems to have a 'not intended' sense, perhaps overlapping with the 'predestination' sense described above.

Indeed, one might expect a certain amount of indeterminacy in some instances, as this sort of example might reflect the bridging context that arose as a new use developed. As a further example of this indeterminacy, in (24), the overall meaning is blurred between 'not intended' and 'prohibited'. As in all of these agentless cases, some unspecified offstage entity has a backgrounded element of control; here it is some notion of 'social convention'.

24) All those kinds of slogans were a very good example of how er, women hating comes to the fore whenever women get in positions women *are not supposed to* be in.

A further interesting difference in negation between BE *supposed to* and BE *meant to* and other verbs that have similar uses is shown below. In the hearsay examples in (25)-(31), the first is a typical example from a website, while (26) was made to the author by a nurse.

25) I also think it's *meant to* be good for digestion. (*horseandhounds.co.uk* 8/2/2012)

26) It's *meant to* be good for indigestion.

Examples (27)-(28), are based on the original (26) and are (invented) parallel examples of an evidential reportative, or 'hearsay', use. The reading in all three is [*it BE* 'hearsay' *good for X*]. In other words, (26)-(28) mobilise the same meaning.

27) It's *said to* be good for indigestion.

28) It'*s supposed to* be good for indigestion.

Now consider the negatives of these in (29)-(31). The negation in (29) is as expected; the reporting verb itself is negated and the meaning is [*it NOT BE* 'hearsay' *good for* X].

29) It'*s not said to* be good for indigestion.

In contrast, (30)-(31) have the reading [*it BE* 'hearsay' *NOT good for X*] i.e. *not* negates the proposition that is being reported.

30) It'*s not supposed to* be good for indigestion.

31) It'*s not meant to* be good for indigestion.

Critically, the position of *not* can be varied in (30)-(31) with no change of meaning in any position of NOT, marked with subscript *n* in (32).

32) It'*s* $_n$ *meant* $_n$ *to* $_n$ be $_n$ good for indigestion.

This reveals an interesting anomaly in use compared to how the supposed template constructions operate. Note firstly that the negative permissive discussed above with *allowed* is similar to predicative adjective constructions like *I am not scared to go*. The element [BE-neg] has the effect of negating the element it immediately precedes. However, this linearity does not apply to the strings [BE-neg *supposed to* +inf] and [BE-neg *meant to* +inf] in the hearsay, where it is always the infinitive complement that is negated, regardless of the position of the negator. In essence, wherever the *not* can legitimately be placed, the sense is [*it BE* 'hearsay' *NOT good for X*]. This is similar to the pattern of flexible negation positioning in subject raising auxiliary-like constructions such as APPEAR and SEEM. Critically, this is not the case for *said*, the prototypical reporting verb, in (29), where *not* before *said* negates the report. Any position of *not* after *said* negates the proposition that is being reported.

It seems that, both intuitively and anecdotally, there is little, if any, difference between the BE *supposed to* and BE *meant to* in any of these functions in actual usage event contexts. They are as close being synonymous in all of these uses as is possible to intuit, hence the term 'polysynonymy' can be applied. Taken with the unique overall usage range of these forms, these negation issues seem to suggest that BE *supposed to* and BE *meant to* have somehow developed a parallel 'life of their own', beyond their original source templates. The usage range is unique to these forms, even though they rely on existing schemas for their historical developments to this point. Yet, as illustrated above, they are not only unique in their ability to cover all of these functions, but their patterning with negation differs from their sanctioning constructions as well. Hence the claim that they have developed a 'life of their own'. However, the story does not end there; this paper concerns not only the observation that this unique convergence has already occurred with these two constructions,

but also the point that they both have a relatively new fifth function in their agentless passive forms.

An emerging use

The emerging use, which I refer to as the 'reported predictive', is illustrated in (33) from the BNC. This is a typical example and, like this one, most tokens concern the weather. Note that Florence is clearly asking for something more than a mere evaluation from David.

33) Florence: What's the weather like today?

David: It's sunny today.

Florence: Well what's it *meant to* be like?

David: It's *supposed to* be dry, warm and sunny. (BNC KC2 3121)

In (34), from an overheard conversation, the future is slightly more distant, but note that neither speaker is giving their own opinion.

34) A) Sunday'*s supposed to* be sunny.

B) Yeah it'*s meant to* be nice til Monday.

I suggest that a gloss for these uses is something like (35):

35) 'They say that it should be nice on Sunday.'

This new extension reports a view of the world in the future that is expected to be the case based on the knowledge held by some expert or authority. It functions to distance the speaker from the content of the proposition and is categorically not used to express a personal prediction about the future. Example (36) pushes the timescale into the more distant future. This has an explicit hearsay marker *I've heard* in addition to the reported predictive, and reads rather like a synonym of the BE *going to* future. However, this must be expressing some difference in meaning to BE *going to*, otherwise why would the speaker choose this construction instead of that one. It might be on order to mitigate the high level of certainty that BE *going to* tends to imply.

36) I've heard next year *is meant to* be one of the best years for the Northern Lights. (*trippy.com* 23/5/2016)

In (37) a sports commentator is commenting on the rumoured availability of good quarter backs (qbs) in America Football league teams. Anecdotally, I have also heard examples concerning reported predictions about the economy as well. Unfortunately, these are quite uncommon in written data.

37) next year *is supposed to* be a good year for qbs too.

There exists a past tense version of this construction that is remarkably similar. However, with these examples, there is an implicature that the proposition is counterfactual, in the same way the past tense uses of the deontic are (e.g. *You are late. You were meant to be here at 8 o'clock*). Example (38) is from a tennis commentary, but could as easily have been realised with *supposed* instead of *meant*.

38) This *was meant to* be an easy match.

No 'plan' or 'intention' is being expressed and there are certainly overtones of a reported belief, yet it is not exactly 'hearsay'. In this type of use, there may even be an element of the predestination use here, and it is more abstract, perhaps more subjectivised, than the other uses described above. Example (39) is a negative of (38), but it does not give rise to a prohibitive sense, also suggesting these are based on the hearsay construction, not the deontic.

39) This was not *meant*/*supposed to* be an easy match.

The negation in (39) aligns with the unique hearsay pattern for negation noted above and is glossed as (40).

40) This *was expected to* not be an easy match.

The form BE *expected to* can also be used to state predictions about the future, but unlike *supposed* and *meant* it can do so either as a passive or in the active. Clearly this use of BE *expected to* is a potential template for the reported predictive, but oddly, no other 'hearsay' or reporting verb can be used like this.

There is one more pattern of use that suggests the forms are grammaticalising away from their original templates. This concerns agentive *by* phrases. First, consider the standard deontic in a passive, like (41) with e.g., BE *required*, *intend to*. With these, an agentive *by* phrase can be used. However, the BE *supposed to* deontic cannot take one.[28]

41) I *am required to* do this today *by my boss*.

42) *I *am supposed to* do this today *by my boss*.

It seems that BE *supposed to* deontic can only occur in the barest possible form of the deontic schema, but in the hearsay functions of BE *supposed to*, an agentive by phrase is acceptable, as it is with other verbs.

[28] Although note (i)-(ii), where, exceptionally, a *by* phrase can be used; however, *by law* is not an agent here.
i) This *is required to* be here *by law*.
ii) This *is supposed to* be here *by law*.

It should be noted next that where a SAY type verb is used with an agentive *by* phrase like (44), a particular entity is specified as the source of the proposition and, as a result, the 'hearsay' reading arising in (43) is lost and (44) stands as a plain passive reporting use.

43) He *is said to* be in a critical condition. (KRM 1184)

44) He *is said to* be in a critical condition by the hospital/doctors/his doctor.

In direct contrast to this, BE *meant to*, which grammaticalised this use, the *by* phrase is simply unacceptable.

45) He *is meant to* be in a critical condition.

46) * He *is meant to* be in a critical condition by the hospital/ doctors/his doctor.

It seems that BE *meant to* can only occur in the barest possible form of the hearsay schema, but in the deontic functions of BE *meant to*, an agentive *by* phrase is acceptable, as it is with other verbs.

Building on this syntactic restriction notion, although 'hearsay' can be paraphrased with REPUTE or RUMOUR, these words themselves cannot be used with an agentive *by* phrase, and, rather like reportative MEAN, nor can they be used as active verbs with this sort of meaning in present day English, i.e., "*They *rumoured* him to be guilty" is not acceptable. However, just like other hearsay examples in (47), they can be used with an adverb of frequency such as *commonly/generally*.

47) He *is commonly supposed/said/reputed/rumoured to* be the best surgeon.

This is not possible with BE *meant to* as shown in (48). Again, BE *meant to* can only occur in the barest form of the hearsay schema.

48) *He *is commonly meant to* be the best surgeon.

A similar restriction occurs with BE *supposed to* in the deontic with some frequency adverbs and again, BE *supposed to* can only occur in the barest form of the deontic schema.

49) He *is frequently obliged/required to* attend on Sundays.

50) * He *is frequently supposed to* attend on Sundays

Finally, a similar point occurs within the reported predictive construction. The point of hearsay is that the source is necessarily off-stage and the claim is usually unattributed; evidential constructions of this type simply serve to mark that the source of information in the proposition is not the speaking themselves. Examples (51)-(53) show how an agentive *by*

phrase can be used to report a prediction with BE *expected to*, but not with BE *supposed to* and BE *meant to*.

51) It'*s expected* by the Met office *to* be sunny tomorrow.

52) *It'*s meant* by the Met office *to* be sunny tomorrow.

53) *It'*s supposed* by the Met *to* office be sunny tomorrow.

Note that *expect* here is simply a passive of the active *X expects Y*, whereas with BE *supposed to* and BE *meant to*, an active with this sense is not possible.

DISCUSSION

I have shown above how BE *supposed to* and BE *meant to* can instantiate a range of functions: hearsay, deontic, negative permissive and pre-destination. I have noted that only BE *supposed to* and BE *meant to* can express all these functions. It is clear that the hearsay construction has extended its use with these two forms into a sort of 'hearsay about future events', or what I have called a 'reported predictive' use. With caveats, BE *expected to* can perform a similar function and pre-dates it, suggesting it is the licensing construction, especially given its deontic function overlaps as well. I have noted some idiosyncrasies above where negatives are used, and some others with passive *by* phrase restrictions.

It is the idiosyncratic syntax and exclusion of other hearsay type verbs in the reported prediction use that provides the strongest evidence that, as they grammaticalise further, these two forms are becoming more closely aligned in scope and, I would argue, are becoming more modal as they do so. The forms BE *supposed to* and BE *meant to* are clearly grammaticalising a new use, described above as a 'reported predictive'. Such an analysis is supported by the fact that their syntax is becoming more restricted compared to the source constructions. The claim that it is a 'new function' is justified because simply stating that they have extended in their meaning to include hearsay about future events does not account for these syntactic restrictions and nor does it explain why other hearsay type verbs cannot be used thus.

Sense inheritance and development is complex and each example discussed needs to be considered in its own historical perspective. In particular, the constructions with MEAN and SUPPOSE have different meanings when instantiating the pattern BE + *-en* + *infinitive* than they have in their active uses. Bearing in mind that the reported predictive is currently restricted to the forms in the schema [*is/are supposed/meant to be*], the question remains of what exactly is the basic constructional template for this emerging construction? The discussion below explores the relationship between the two forms and the various available templates that might be said to sanction the new use.

On a traditional view, meaning is componential, which means in effect that the passive sense would need to have an active counterpart in order to inherit this aspect of meaning. However, this is exactly the reason why these expressions have attracted attention in the literature: they do not have these senses in the active. In contrast, Cruse discusses default inheritance in the semantic network, but argues that meaning is not componential.[29] That means there is scope for meanings to change from source construction to derived construction in various ways. Goldberg further argues that an attribute or a feature of a particular construction can become entrenched as a different sense.[30] This is how metonymy works in meaning change. In addition, Gisborne argues that when a sublexeme inherits from a lexeme "it can acquire a different sense".[31] If we take these ideas about inheritance and apply them to larger constructions than just words, it certainly appears that this is what is occurring here, i.e. the meaning of the 'new' or emerging use is only inheriting part of the meaning(s) (and syntax) found in the earlier uses.

Before concluding the discussion, there is one more argument to make. To this point, I have described the different functions of these expressions, like the hearsay and deontic for example, as though they were clearly distinguishable from each other and that it is always obvious and clear which interpretation applies in a given example. In fact, in most examples, the context does indeed make this unproblematic, which gives an illusion of clear water between them. However, it is actually possible to force ambiguity into the data, where it may be unclear exactly which function is being expressed. Consider the sentence *You are supposed to be kind*. Out of context, this is indeterminate between a hearsay and the deontic construction. The sentence is contextualised linguistically in (54)-(57) to aid discussion.

54) You *are supposed to* be kind. I have heard about you.

55) You *are supposed to* be kind. This is a delicate situation.

56) You *are meant to* be kind. I have heard about you.

57) You *are meant to* be kind. This is a delicate situation.

The point is that in order for the meaning to be resolved, the hearer must entertain both potential construals in mind simultaneously, at least until enough context is revealed for one meaning to emerge as the most likely one meant by the speaker. In a real interaction, the meaning is resolved only when the hearer decides if they are being complimented or scolded, probably by interpreting prosodic features of the utterance. But as the utterance progresses through time as it is spoken, or read, the hearer/reader initially needs to activate both possible interpretations and only once sufficient context is available can they decide which meaning the specific use should be assigned to. In other words, the hearer has to decide which of the

[29] Cruse, *Meaning in Language*
[30] Goldberg, *Constructions at Work*, 170.
[31] Gisborne, *Event Structure*, 131.

potential templates to apply in their interpretation of the utterance. This situation would be likely to consistently arise in communications like text messages and so on.

This leaves us with the useful position that if both templates can be activated at the same time during utterance interpretation, and that only extended context can disambiguate them, then perhaps the fact that the two older uses were simultaneously activated over many usage event contexts actually led to the flexibility in interpretation that all owed 'new' uses to emerge. Such a point may well apply to grammaticalisation as whole and to the deontic development of BE *supposed to* in particular. I would therefore propose that while the passive hearsay construction does form the basic syntactic template for the interpretation of the strings as a reported predictive, there is some element of deontic modality here as well. In other words, both the hearsay and the deontic supply some components of meaning, as well as supplying some elements of syntactic pattern constraints. In terms of the meaning itself, there seems to be an assumption that the information being passed on in this reported predictive use is *necessarily* to be considered as true, in contrast to a standard hearsay use, where we understand that it is a relatively unsubstantiated report. Gisborne also points out that when a feature is associated with a difference in syntax, as is the case here, the result is that new senses arise. He states that "where there is co-occurring variation in their complementation" this is "related to a different sublexeme".[32] In other words, the new sense, with the slightly altered syntax, is indeed a new form / meaning pairing, and therefore a new construction.

In light of these points it seems fair to say that this emerging sense of BE *meant/supposed to* is the result of a combination of existing uses; in fact it is a 'blend' of only the most basic forms of the two templates. It includes some syntactic and functional features inherited from how the templates are instantiated by *meant/supposed* in the other four uses they have in common.

In support of this solution, it is helpful to consider how pairs of form and meaning, i.e., 'constructions', are used to "mobilize concepts"[33] which in turn can be considered as types of 'mental spaces' in the sense of Fauconnier and Turner.[34] On their view, two existing concepts can be blended to create new mental spaces and, critically, an existing form can be used to mobilise this blend. Thus the old form gains a new meaning and it may in time become a new construction in its own right and be the source for further blends. This idea of blending mental spaces appears to be what is happening with these two forms in their various uses. This is not a new idea and the relation of these two fields is also noted by Langacker.[35] However, it has not been applied before to such a complex case, as far as I know. The conclusion is that the new 'reported predictive' is based on existing templates, but the new use has its feet in both the main source constructions; the two forms have in fact together

[32] Ibid.
[33] Cruse, *Meaning in Language*, 46.
[34] Fauconnier and Turner, *Way We Think*
[35] Maldonado, "Ronald Langacker"

developed an independence of sorts, a kind of 'life of their own' as an emerging blended modal-like construction that expresses a more abstract meaning than the previous uses.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The evidence discussed above on the differences between the original templates and negative uses suggests that the BE *supposed to* and BE *meant to* forms have developed an independent status from the templates they were based on, and also that they are 'linked' in their grammaticalisation paths. It is not a new claim that BE *supposed to* is grammaticalising, or that it is a 'semi-modal'.[36] However, this paper concludes that both forms are entering what could be a 'next stage' in their grammaticalisation; in addition to their highly converged future obligation (deontic) uses and hearsay (evidential) uses, they seem to be developing as semi-modals of 'authority-derived predictions' about future events. The data discussion reveals a significantly idiosyncratic syntax, compared to similar constructions, which suggests that the forms could well be stored as independent complex substantive constructions as argued for by Noël & Van Der Auwera.[37] In the case of BE *supposed to* and BE *meant to*, we are at a stage where the two constructions seem almost indistinguishable, except with the former, an agent cannot be used in the deontic, and in the latter, an agent cannot be used in the hearsay. I noted that neither can take an agent in the new reported prediction function.

Finally, the question as to why there are two parallel versions that both express all these functions is not clear. Given the convergence between BE *supposed to* and BE *meant to,* it is interesting that it has resulted in two competing constructions with exactly the same functional scope; one would expect a difference in form to reflect a difference in meaning or functions, however slight that may be. In general, synonymous form/meaning pairings can be seen as 'competing' with one another for the 'right' to express a particular function. As such, true synonymy is rare and typically each form tends to specialise a distinct use. Alternatively, one may simply slip out of use. Here though, they are used almost interchangeably. The answer may lie in register; BE *meant to* may be the least formal and BE *supposed to* more so, but a detailed corpus study would be needed to ascertain this reliably. Their uses in available corpora such as the BNC do not exhibit significant variation with respect to function or collocation, although BE *supposed to* is far more common than BE *meant to* by a ratio of around 10:1. It would, however, be worth a thorough investigation into register related variation of these constructions with a larger corpus.

Overall, this paper has presented much authentic data that supports the argument that the BE *supposed to* and BE *meant to* forms are blends of existing templates and that they are strongly linked to each other as the grammaticalise further; they have some sort of

[36] Biber et al., *Longman Grammar*
[37] Noël and van der Auwera, "Revisiting *Be Supposed To*", 621.

independent status, and have grown beyond their source templates. It was proposed that the fact that two (or more) constructional schemas/templates need to be simultaneously activated in order to aid correct interpretation may be the bridging context that promoted each change along the way. This point requires further exploration in other constructions that are 'polysynonymous' and indeterminate, such as the *why don't you* +V string, which also has several quite different uses.

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